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EUR/RPM CHRIS DAVY AND EUR/WE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/19/2019  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [MOPS](#) [MARR](#) [NATO](#) [FR](#)  
SUBJECT: FRENCH RESPONSE ON DOWNSIZING KFOR

REF: STATE 26179

Classified By: Political Minister-Counselor Kathleen Allegrone for reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

(C) On March 19, Pol M/C met with French Presidency Strategic Affairs Advisor Francois Richier to deliver reftel demarche against premature downsizing of troops in the KFOR mission. Richier responded that French government analyses showed that Kosovo is now more stable and, as such, the situation no longer justifies maintaining such a large presence on the ground. He recalled that PM Fillon had previewed this possibility in his speech to French parliamentarians when they reviewed overseas deployments (reported Paris Points). He noted that historically there is a tendency to leave troops deployed in areas that have stabilized even if they are more urgently needed elsewhere, specifically mentioning the case of the French deployments in Cote d'Ivoire. Richier felt that there are currently other greater needs for some of the KFOR troops and added that if the situation were to change, French troops could always return. Finally, he observed that there may be some bureaucrats at NATO who do not want to reduce the KFOR presence for institutional reasons pertaining more to maintaining a higher profile and preventing the diversion of KFOR's resources elsewhere. In response, Pol M/C urged that France engage in extensive consultations with NATO before any decision is taken and emphasized that U.S. analysis of the situation in Kosovo is that it remains fragile. Richier acknowledged that our respective experts may have reached differing assessments and promised to look further into the matter.

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